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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 39 OCTOBER 24, 2022

**INSIDE**

**Road forward for women debated during US marches**

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# *Students, oil workers join protests against Iran's rulers*

**BY BRIAN WILLIAMS**

In face of attacks by government thugs, protests have spread across Iran since the Sept. 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman. She had been arrested three days earlier by the regime's hated "morality police" for allegedly violating the government's oppressive dress code requiring women to cover their hair, then taken to the hospital from the jail.

The demonstrations, now into their fourth week, and the government's attempts to crush them have brought to the surface a deep political crisis in the country. Since late 2017 working people have found ways to stand up to the regime's abuses and repression, protesting soaring prices and demonstrating against the deadly cost of the government's military adventures in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

The breadth of the current actions is among the most far-reaching since the consolidation of a reactionary bour-

**Continued on page 4**

# As Putin bombs civilians — Defend Ukraine sovereignty!

## Unrest grows among workers, nationalities in Russia



Via Elena Zelenskaya

**Ukrainians take refuge in Kyiv metro station during Russian missile assault Oct. 9, singing national anthem. Lina Malina said fellow Ukrainians, her people, are a "nation of invincibles."**

**BY ROY LANDERSEN**

Russian forces launched deadly missile strikes against over 20 cities across Ukraine Oct. 10 as a brutal response to a series of setbacks to President Vladimir Putin's attempts to conquer the country. After seven and a half months of invasion, the Ukrainian people continue to defend their independence and Putin is lashing out from a position of growing weakness.

In the most far-reaching attack since the start of the war, a total of 84 Russian missiles and 24 drones were fired during rush hour at Kyiv, the capital, at Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih, Zaporizhzhia, as well as Lviv in the west. As dozens were killed or injured, people fled to underground shelters. Civilian infrastructure was targeted, knocking out power and water in several cities.

Putin says the bombardment was retaliation for the Oct. 8 explosion on the Kerch Bridge that links Crimea, seized from Ukraine and annexed by Moscow in 2014, with the Russian mainland. He blames Kyiv for the blast. The bridge is the main route supplying weapons

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# *Track workers vote down rail contract, other unions to vote*

**BY JOE SWANSON**

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, which organizes some 25,000 track builders and repair workers, one of the largest of the 12 rail workers' unions, announced Oct. 10 that its members had voted down a tentative agreement reached last month.

"The membership voted in record numbers," President Tony Cardwell wrote on the union's website, "exhibiting that they are paying close attention and are engaged in the process. BMWED members are concerned with the direction of their employers and the mismanagement and greed in which they have consistently implemented, and are united in their resolve to improve their working conditions." The vote was 6,646 against, 5,100 for.

"Railroaders are discouraged and upset with working conditions and compensation and hold their employer in low regard. Railroaders do not feel valued," he said. "They resent the fact that man-

**Continued on page 2**

# Demand Washington end its economic war on Cuba! Now!

## *Socialist Workers Party National Committee statement*



Cubahora

**Crews repair electrical grid Sept. 30 in Pinar del Rió after Hurricane Ian. There is no better moment to explain the facts and win working people to oppose U.S. economic war on Cuba.**

*The following statement was released Oct. 11 by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.*

The Socialist Workers Party demands that the U.S. government end its 63-year-long economic, trade, and financial war against the people of Cuba. Immediately. No strings attached.

This brutal policy has been carried out by *every one* of the 13 Democratic and Republican administrations since 1959. The U.S. rulers' aim has been to crush the spirit of Cuba's working people, the socialist revolution they made and have defended for more than six decades, and the example it sets for toilers in the United States, across the Americas and worldwide.

The cumulative toll of this all-encompassing imperialist assault is magnified

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# *Join 'Militant' to build, go to protests against Iran gov't*

**BY VIVIAN SAHNER**

Socialist Workers Party candidates and members have been building and participating in demonstrations across the U.S. in solidarity with working people and youth protesting in Iran over the death of Mahsa Amini after she was detained for allegedly violating the country's anti-women dress codes.

Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia, spoke at a "Women, life, freedom" rally of 500 in Atlanta Oct. 8. She pointed to the widespread support given to the protests by working people across Iran, including from the Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers. "Workers and farmers in Iran bear the brunt of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis,

**Continued on page 3**

# Democrats attack Supreme Court, constitutional freedoms we need

**BY TERRY EVANS**

U.S. bosses, backed by their twin political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, are driving to put the deepening crisis of their capitalist system onto the backs of workers and farmers. Neither of the major capitalist parties, however, is able to establish stable majority governments to rule. When in power, they rule by presidential edicts, not passing legislation.

In this context, the Democrats increasingly seek ways to slander and limit the rights of their opponents, and to attack crucial liberties. An important part of this is Democrats' growing attacks on the existence and reach of the

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## Inside

# Track workers reject contract

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agement holds no regard for their quality of life, illustrated by their stubborn reluctance to provide a higher quantity of paid time off, especially for sickness."

"Those that voted against the agreement see it as a slap in the face," Rod Blessing, assistant local chair for Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Lodge 1320 in Lincoln, Nebraska, told the *Militant* Oct. 10, "not getting more paid time-off days in cases where they need medical care. And they think a higher wage raise is needed with increasing inflation costs."

Rail bosses routinely send BMWE workers hundreds of miles from home for work. A key outstanding issue is how and when they get paid for these trips.

Conductors and engineers, members of the two largest rail unions — the Transportation Division of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD) and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, with a combined membership of over 60,000 workers, have yet to vote on their tentative agreement.

Discussion over the fact that the contracts don't address workers' main concerns — inhuman, arbitrary and dangerous work schedules, punitive attendance policies and boss demands to cut "crew" size to just an engineer! — is smoldering in rail yards and on locomotives.

These workers were sent a video Oct. 7 where BLET President Dennis Pierce and SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson discuss the tentative national freight agreement.

Pierce said that starting Oct. 17 members of both unions will have 30 days to read, discuss and vote on the contract proposal. The results will be announced in mid-November.

As the contract debate is unfolding, the National Transportation Safety Board reported a few months ago that in the last 25 years nearly 500 rail workers have been killed while doing their jobs. Some 150,000 more have been injured. That averages nearly 20 railroad workers killed and 6,000 injured a year.

**Rail workers killed on the job**

Three SMART-TD members were killed on the job over the last six weeks. And a derailment after two freight trains collided near Miami International Airport Sept. 24 put four crew members into the hospital. Their co-workers are angry because the CSX railroad, who they work for, hasn't said anything about what caused the collision or reported the conditions of their fellow union members.

The responsibility for rail workers' deaths lies with rail bosses pushing for longer and heavier trains — up to three miles long — with smaller and smaller crews, on schedules that dictate constant fatigue, often insufficient training and a profits-first goal of cutting corners.

International Association of Machinists District 19, which organizes the 6,600 locomotive machinists, track equipment mechanics and facility maintenance workers, voted down their tentative agreement by 75% last month. Three days before a Sept. 29 strike deadline, union officials announced they had reached a second proposed contract. Results of the vote are supposed to be announced no later than Nov. 20.

"Everything isn't all about pay. It's about our way of life," John Flibotte, a machinist on the Union Pacific railroad in Council Bluffs, Iowa, told Omaha station KMTV3 Oct. 5, as he and a few other rail workers carried out an informational picket line. Talking about what Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and SMART-TD workers face, he said, "There are guys, conductors and engineers, that can't take a day off without fear of repercussions and getting fired."




Trains/David Lassen

**Rail track workers picket in Kansas City, Missouri, at North American Rail Shippers conference in May. The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, which organizes 25,000 track workers, announced Oct. 10 its members voted down national agreement with rail bosses.**

To be able to go to a doctor's appointment under their proposed contract, he said, they have to "make appointments on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and schedule those 30 days out." This makes getting timely tests or follow-up visits almost impossible.

American Train Dispatchers Association members ratified a tentative agreement Oct. 4. They are the fourth rail union to approve an agreement, along with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Transportation Communications Union/IAM and Brotherhood of Railway Carmen.

In the fight to secure a contract that begins to meet our needs and to get control of our work schedules and the conditions we face, the place to start is by strengthening our unions and taking steps to get out the truth about what we face to other workers and farmers to win their support.

**End US Economic War Against Cuba!**

**Saturday, Oct. 29, Times Square, 12 p.m.**

- **Take Cuba off Washington's 'State Sponsors of Terrorism' list**
- **End all U.S. anti-Cuba economic and travel sanctions**

For more information: unvote4cuba@gmail.com; www.unvote4cuba.org

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**Protest FBI Harassment of Cuba Solidarity Brigade in Puerto Rico**

***Panelists:* Milagros Rivera, president Cuba Solidarity Committee of Puerto Rico.** Also Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón, People's Church; Gail Walker, IFCO/Pastors for Peace; Martín Koppel, Socialist Workers Party; Representative, Frente Independentista Boricua; Representative, African People's Socialist Party

**Friday Oct. 28 — 7 p.m. New York City**

First Spanish United Methodist Church (People's Church) 163 E. 111st St., East Harlem

For more information: frenteindependentistaboricua@gmail.com




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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

# ‘Militant’ builds Iran protests

**Continued from front page**
compounded by U.S.-led sanctions,” Potash said. “Sanctions fall hardest on working people,” who are standing up to the reactionary bourgeois clerical regime there.

In Los Angeles, party members and *Militant* supporters joined an Oct. 9 action of 1,000 protesters outraged over the death of Amini.

After subscribing to the *Militant* at an earlier demonstration, one man sought out the SWP’s table. He bought the Farsi-language edition of *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US* by Larry Seigle and Steve Clark. The book tells the story of the party’s fight to push back the U.S. government’s use of its secret political police, the FBI, against unionists, Black rights fighters and Socialist Workers Party members from the 1930s until today.

With the FBI spearheading the White House’s current assault on constitutional freedoms, party members are finding growing interest in the title. Twelve other books in Farsi were bought at the Los Angeles demonstration, along with two subscriptions to the *Militant*.

At similar demonstrations and union strike picket lines, labor movement events and on workers’ doorsteps, members of the party and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are bringing support and introducing the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries as part of an eight-week campaign to sell 1,350 *Militant* subscriptions and the same number of books.

In the U.S. $140,000 is being raised for the SWP Party-Building Fund. Many workers understand why the party accepts no funding from big business. It relies instead on the support of working people who contribute whatever they can to help finance its work.

The *Militant* spreads the word about union struggles and is a tool for building solidarity. Along with the books, the paper explains the truth about the exploitation, oppression and wars that are part and parcel of capitalist rule, and offers a road forward to replace it with workers’ power.

In Cincinnati the party’s candidate for U.S. Congress, Jacquie Henderson, and SWP member Betsy Farley knocked on the door of retired retail worker Mary Goodwin Oct. 9. “President Biden’s government has used its weight against rail workers fighting against conditions that increase injuries and deaths,” Farley said. “It has used the National Labor Relations Board against striking coal miners in Alabama.”

Henderson showed Goodwin *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, pointing out how constitutional freedoms were defended and extended in the course of revolutionary battles and other working-class struggles. Goodwin got the book and a subscription to the *Militant*. She bought a second subscription for a friend in California. “I think she will be interested in this too,” she said.



Militant/Jim Rogers

**Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, speaks at “Women, life, freedom” rally Oct. 8 in Atlanta protesting death of Mahsa Amini in Iran. “Workers and farmers in Iran bear brunt of worldwide capitalist economic crisis, compounded by U.S. sanctions,” she said.**

Join in getting out the word about today’s working-class strikes and struggles and building solidarity, using the *Militant* to get out the truth. Contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

# Road forward for women debated during US marches

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

WASHINGTON — Thousands of people, including many young women, turned out for the “Women’s Wave” march here Oct. 8, as they did in similar actions across the country. Organizers appealed to them to join in campaigning and voting for Democratic Party candidates in the November elections.

“Trump Republicans want to hand out kickbacks to corporations and block every bill to lower the cost of living for all of us while destroying constitutional rights to bodily autonomy for women,” Women’s March Executive Director Rachel O’Leary Carmona told the crowd. “That’s why this election is about a women’s wave.”

But there were a wide variety of views among the thousands who joined the march. “They say vote Democrat, but the Democrats are already in power and what good has that done?” Aurozo Niaz told this *Militant* worker-correspondent.

Niaz is a 22-year-old member of the Young Democratic Socialists of America chapter at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. She agreed that the DSA backs the Democratic Party, and was interested in learning more about the Socialist Workers Party’s call for working people to break from the Democrats and Republicans and to fight for a labor party based on our unions.

**Capitalism’s erosion of the family**

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party actively campaigned at the action, explaining how the fight for women’s emancipation is essential to defend the interests of the working class amid capitalism’s decline and its erosion of the family, which is all many of us have to fall back on.

They put up tables with the *Militant,* books and signs highlighting a working-class road forward, including to woman’s emancipation, attracting the attention of many participants.

“For reproductive and maternal health care, sex education, safe and reliable contraception, safe and legal abortion,” read one sign.

“For a jobs program and working conditions that allow family time. Support union fights at Warrior Met, Ingredion, Corn Nuts,” read another.

“Defend constitutional freedoms. No to the FBI, the rulers’ political police,” said a third. At the rally in New York City, SWP members included a sign that read, “Decriminalize abortion, no to population control!”

These signs help spur broader discussion about the character of the crisis facing working people and what we should do about it.

Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for Congress from New Jersey, spoke with Stacey Gray and her daughter, Cosette Miller, 24.

**Continued on page 4**

## *Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund*

**Sept. 17 - November 15 (week three)**

| Country | Sub quota | Subs sold | Books quota | Books sold | Fund quota | Fund received |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UNITED STATES | | | | | | |
| Atlanta | 75 | 35 | 75 | 27 | $9,600 | $983 |
| Chicago | 110 | 67 | 110 | 45 | $14,000 | $3,015 |
| Cincinnati | 70 | 21 | 70 | 15 | $6,000 | |
| Dallas-Fort Worth | 65 | 29 | 65 | 30 | $5,000 | |
| Lincoln | 15 | 6 | 15 | 3 | $500 | $300 |
| Los Angeles | 90 | 35 | 90 | 62 | $15,250 | |
| Miami | 45 | 9 | 45 | 6 | $5,750 | $1,243 |
| Minneapolis | 70 | 18 | 70 | 16 | $5,500 | |
| N.New Jersey | 70 | 33 | 70 | 36 | $7,500 | $491 |
| New York | 115 | 39 | 115 | 41 | $21,000 | $1,845 |
| Oakland | 90 | 45 | 90 | 42 | $15,500 | $3,881 |
| Philadelphia | 50 | 15 | 50 | 19 | $6,000 | $600 |
| Pittsburgh | 65 | 27 | 65 | 16 | $6,000 | $1,293 |
| Seattle | 75 | 23 | 75 | 16 | $14,500 | $2,000 |
| Washington | 50 | 21 | 50 | 25 | $4,600 | $200 |
| Other | | | | 47 | | $750 |
| Total U.S. | 1055 | 423 | 1055 | 446 | $136,700 | $16,601 |
| Prisoners | 50 | 42 | | | | |
| UNITED KINGDOM | | | | | | |
| London | 40 | 18 | 40 | 26 | | |
| Manchester | 40 | 13 | 40 | 9 | | |
| Total U.K. | 80 | 31 | 80 | 35 | | |
| Canada | 80 | 32 | 80 | 39 | | |
| Australia | 30 | 14 | 30 | 7 | | |
| **Total** | **1,295** | **542** | **1,245** | **527** | **$136,700** | **$16,601** |
| **SHOULD BE** | **1,350** | **506** | **1,350** | **506** | **$140,000** | **$52,500** |

# *Donate California gas rebate checks to the ‘Militant’*

**BY NORTON SANDLER**

LOS ANGELES — “We welcome the proposal from readers of the *Militant* in California to organize to contribute the state gas rebate payments they’re starting to get to the *Militant*,” said editor John Studer in an Oct. 10 interview. “This is a timely initiative as the *Militant* is facing steeply inflated expenses while we’re working to expand the reach of the paper.”

“Costs for printing the *Militant* have jumped $200 an issue,” said Studer. “Our distributors in the U.S. and around the world rely on timely delivery of the paper. Mailing and FedEx costs are up over $1,000 a month and still rising. And we’re confronted with replacing 20-year-old office chairs and other equipment that no longer meet our needs, adding thousands in one-time expenses.” In spite of this, Studer said, “the *Militant* refuses to raise its $5 introductory subscription, the $1 cover price for a copy, or the cut-rate and free subscriptions we offer to fellow workers behind bars. These are the same prices we’ve maintained for years.”

Studer noted that the *Militant* is financed solely by its readers — working people who give as much as they can to our yearly spring fund drive, and in special donations they send in when they renew their subscriptions.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Democratic Party-dominated state legislature are touting this rebate as an offset for the high cost of gas in the state — more than $2 a gallon above the national average. Beginning Oct. 7, those who filed a California 2020 state income tax return will be eligible to receive a one-time payment of $350 or $700 for couples who filed a joint return. Politicians in Sacramento claim this will provide relief from soaring prices at the gas pump, but this pittance is a drop in the bucket compared to the across-the-board price squeeze workers face, of which high fuel prices are a major component.

The governor and the big oil companies blame each other for the high cost of gas in California. The oil companies say California environmental regulations designed to promote “green energy” are the culprit. Newsom says the oil companies are profiteering during an inflationary crisis and should be subject to a windfall tax. This song and dance has gone on for years, while millions of workers and their families are hammered at the pump.

We urge readers of the *Militant* in California to join us in contributing these one-time gas rebates to the *Militant*. There is no better way to use them. Checks can be sent to the Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018 or online at themilitant.com.

# Protests against Iran's rulers

Continued from front page

geois, clerical regime in 1983, during a counterrevolution aimed at pushing back workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities who carried out the popular Iranian Revolution four years earlier. The 1979 revolution rid Iran of the brutal rule of the U.S.-backed shah, opened space for the toilers to fight in their own interests, and brought working people into action, establishing workers councils in the factories, fields and refineries.

When schools opened this fall thousands of students from universities, high schools and even primary schools walked out as protests expanded.

"Get lost!" chanted female students at Alzahra University in Tehran when Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visited the campus Oct. 3. He read a poem equating protesters with flies.

Videos posted by the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers Trade Union Associations shows high school students across the country waving their headscarves and singing and chanting as they march. One shows plainclothes cops shoving women marchers and demonstrators standing up to their thuggery.

At a high school in Gohardasht Karaj, female students removed their headscarfs and forced the director of education to leave Oct. 3. Two days later in a similar protest at a girls' school in Tehran, students rallied against a visit by a representative of the Basij paramilitary force.

"Primary school students in Mahabad," the teachers trade union wrote, "invited people to participate in the protests, distributing handwritten notices" urging them to "shout for your rights." Bystanders applauded their marches.

Workers at a petrochemical complex in Asaluyeh, southern Iran, went on strike Oct. 10. Iranian news agency Tasnim described it as a wage dispute. The Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers threatened to launch a nationwide strike if strikers who have been arrested are not released. "We once again express our solidarity with the people's protest on the streets against the killing of Mahsa," the union said, and called for the "immediate release of those arrested during the recent protests and all political prisoners."

The song "Baraye" by 25-year-old Shervin Hajipour, with lyrics about Iranians' desire "for freedom," is sung by many demonstrators. Its online video was viewed over 40 million times in two days until authorities took it down and put Hajipour in prison for a week.

Shop keepers in many cities have also shutdown in support of the protests.

**Targeting Kurds, other minorities**

Some of the sharpest confrontations are taking place in Sistan-Baluchistan, Iran's poorest province, where the majority of the country's Baloch population of over 2 million live; in Khuzestan, where most of Iran's 1.5 million ethnic Arabs live; and in Iranian Kurdistan, home to a majority of the country's 10 million Kurds. Police forces in Sistan-Baluchistan killed over 80 people Sept. 30-Oct. 6, firing with live ammunition on demonstrations of hundreds.

The Iranian regime also continues to fire ballistic missiles and suicide drones into the Erbil and Sulaimaniyah provinces of the neighboring Kurdistan region of Iraq. At least 16 people, including one child, were killed and over 50 injured in these attacks, Rudaw news agency reported. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps threatened to invade Iraqi Kurdistan Oct. 9 if the Kurdistan Regional Government there didn't expel Iranian Kurdish organizations Tehran blames for inciting the countrywide protests in Iran.

Iranian authorities have arrested at least 1,900 protesters nationwide. Demonstrations have been reported in nearly 100 cities, towns and villages. The Norway-based Iran Human Rights group says more than 185 people, including at least 19 children, had been killed, with hundreds more injured.

"They can kill us, arrest us but we will not remain silent anymore," a university student on his way to join protests in Tehran told Reuters Oct. 8. "Our classmates are in jail. How can we remain silent?"

In an Oct. 3 speech at a graduation ceremony for military recruits, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei blamed U.S. and Israeli government agents for initiating the protests. "These riots were planned," Khamenei insisted.

As part of the government's clampdown, Iran's state media released a video Oct. 6 showing two teachers from France "confessing" to being spies fomenting unrest in Iran. The teachers, Cecile Kohler, president of the National Federation of Education, Culture and Vocational Training in France, and Jacques Paris, were arrested in May. They were visiting Iran on tourist visas and met with leaders of Iran's teachers' unions.



Courtesy of Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers

**Strike by oil workers in Asaluyeh, southern Iran, Oct. 10. "Oil workers will not be silent and passive in the face of the suppression and killing of the people and will protest together and in unison with the people," wrote Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers.**

In response, the Tehran bus workers union spoke out against the frame-up, saying it "firmly condemns the publication of lies by the government and forced confessions under threats and torture."

Workers and farmers in Iran bear the brunt of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, compounded by U.S.-led sanctions. Inflation has risen by 50% over the year, and the country's currency, the rial, has fallen to its lowest level ever.

Actions in solidarity with the protesters in Iran have been held in cities around the world, including New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Kabul, Afghanistan. In Israel, about 100 people, most of them women, rallied in Jerusalem Oct. 6. They held signs in Hebrew, English and Farsi. Many of those participating were of Persian descent.

# Road forward for women debated during US marches

Continued from page 3

Gray had on all kinds of buttons, including one that said "F--- SCOTUS" (the Supreme Court). She said she thought that the overturn of Roe v. Wade showed the Supreme Court should be changed, including by adding more liberal judges.

Kuniansky said that it was good that Roe was overturned, because it was in fact unconstitutional. The liberal majority Supreme Court justices at the time simply wrote their own law, without any foundation in the Constitution, and imposed it on the country.

That cut off the debate among working people that had broken out, a discussion our side was winning, Kuniansky said. The ruling opened the door to years of attacks on women's rights.

"We can't let the right wing have the mantle of being 'pro-life,'" she added. "We're the party that is for life." As the recent Supreme Court Dobbs decision, which overturned Roe, said, it gives us the opportunity to join the debate again and win people over state by state. Kuniansky encouraged those she met to read the Dobbs decision.

Because of the conditions working people face, including inadequate wages, dangerous work hours and schedules, and the spiraling cost of housing, many young people have put off having children and have even moved back in with their parents.

Gray said that was her own experience. She worked at Lowe's during the peak of the pandemic.

"We're not *for* abortion," Kuniansky said. "We're for fighting for child care, cost-of-living escalators in our contracts so that our wages go up with inflation, for widely available sex education, for government-funded family planning including access to contraception and, when needed, to safe abortions."

Miller said that when she got pregnant, she at first planned to have an abortion. The staff at the family planning clinic "explained to me how an abortion works. They didn't try to pressure me one way or another," she said. "They said to take my time to make a decision. I decided to have the baby."

"We need sex education. Not just for girls, but for boys," said Miller, so that they all know how their bodies work and can avoid unplanned pregnancies.

Miller subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women.*

**Importance of involving our unions**

At the Oct. 8 rally in Dallas, Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for governor, was one of the speakers.

"The rail workers' unions are fighting for a livable work schedule to be able to have a family and a life," she said. "These are crucial issues facing women who bear the responsibility of raising a family and taking care of the sick and elderly.

"That is why we must oppose the FBI raid against Trump's home in Florida," Kennedy continued. "If they use the FBI to go after one of their own, think about what they will do to fighters for women's emancipation or the unions standing up for betters conditions."

At the D.C. action, Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New York, told Rose Buchanan, a 22-year-old member of the United Steelworkers union at a factory in Ohio, "We need to start with broader questions we face today, fighting for conditions to make it possible for young people to choose to raise a family."

Buchanan agreed that backing the Democratic Party is a dead end for working people. "We need to build community organizations," she said.

Workers need to work inside the unions as they are today to make them effective and, through our activities, to make them stronger, Lobman said. Through our experiences workers will see the need to forge our own political party, a labor party based on our unions, added James Harris, SWP candidate for Washington, D.C., mayor.

Buchanan said that the union is not very active where she works, and she would like to try and change that.

Lobman, who works at a pizza factory organized by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, described how she and some co-workers circulated a card to build solidarity with fellow union members on strike against Corn Nuts in Fresno, California.

Buchanan subscribed to the *Militant* and bought five books on revolutionary working-class politics.

As I was entering the rally site before the march, a group of participants came by chanting: "Abortion rights, no debate; women's rights, no debate; health care, no debate! Transgender rights, no debate!"

When they paused, I said that in the real world there are many different views and you have to be able to discuss and debate these questions to make progress. One woman replied, "They should just be rights, they shouldn't be up for debate." And the group started back up their chant.

But most people were eager to discuss a way forward. That was reflected in the response to Socialist Workers Party campaigners at the march. They sold 23 books and 20 subscriptions to the *Militant* to participants at the D.C. action.

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Case New Holland strikers fight for 'a life outside of work'

STURTEVANT, Wis. — "We have a life outside of the job. I have three daughters ages 1, 10 and 13. I need to spend time with them, to raise them," Case New Holland striker and United Auto Workers Local 180 member Marques Lawson told the *Militant* on the picket line here Oct. 10. "The company wants us to work 12-hour shifts and more than one Saturday per month. Those hours cut into family life."

There are 600 members of that local and another 430 UAW Local 807 strikers in Burlington, Iowa. The strike began over five months ago.

"The company is greedy," shipping worker Rico Avila said. "They propose a higher premium for health care. They don't want to give us a proper raise."

"The company said they gave us their 'last, best and final offer' two weeks ago, but there was no real improvement," UAW 180 President Yasin Mehdi told the *Militant* by phone. "No further negotiations are scheduled."

These workers need help getting the facts about their strike spread far and wide, and solidarity to back them up. Contributions and messages of support can be sent to UAW Local 180, 3323 Kearney Ave., Mount Pleasant, WI 53403, and to Local 807, 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601.

*— Dan Fein*

## Minnesota health care workers strike 3 days over wages, safety

MINNEAPOLIS — Health care workers here carried out a three-day strike Oct. 3-5 aimed at pressuring bosses at Abbott Northwestern and Mercy Hospital-Unity Campus, both part of Allina Health, to meet their demands for higher wages, better benefits, and safety on the job. Health care workers fighting for contracts throughout the Upper Midwest joined the picket line Oct. 5.

Kellie Benson, a senior mental health coordinator at Abbott-Northwestern, told the *Militant* on the picket line that the 130 workers had joined the SEIU HealthCare of Minnesota and Iowa union in January. "The vote was over 99% and we have been negotiating for our first contract," she said. "We always have a shortage of 30 to 40 workers and this puts extra burdens on the rest of us."

Most of the health care workers have four-year degrees and Allina is offering only a $21.50 hourly wage, below the industry standard, Benson said. "I am proud that not one person crossed the picket line during the three-day strike."

On the picket line were health care workers from M HealthCare Fairview, who joined the union last year and won their first contract Oct. 3.

Also picketing were SEIU members from Planned Parenthood. Some 400 health care workers at Planned Parenthood North Central States, who work in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, had voted by 90% to join the union in July.

Saijen Weihe, who works in the St. Paul Planned Parenthood, said workers there are also trying to get their first contract. "It's a challenge when we are spread out over five states, but we're determined to get what we deserve," she said. "We're glad to be out here supporting the Allina workers."

*— Edwin Fruit*

## Refuse workers in London strike for pay raise, gain solidarity

NEWHAM, England — Dozens of bin workers for the London borough of Newham set off from the Asda superstore parking lot here Sept. 29 marching to demand, "Fair pay for refuse workers." About 80 workers are taking part in the two-week strike.

"The wages for bin workers in Newham is 5,000 pounds [$5,540] per year less than what bin workers are being paid in Tower Hamlets," Steve Edwards, Unite union regional officer, told marchers before they stepped off. "Renters' organizations say that rents have gone up 81% since 2011, while wages have only gone up 15%. So your demand for 2,300 pounds more is only fair."

Teachers at the Calverton Primary School nearby joined the protest. They're on strike after the school's headmaster took away five of the 10 days the workers can take off if their children are sick or for other family emergencies.

The march ended up at the Newham borough offices. The mayor has refused to meet with the strikers.

"We have just sent 100 pounds to the bank account of your branch," said Tommy Anderson from the Unite branch in Waltham Forest at the rally. Dag Tirsén from the Communist League forwarded greetings from Phil Pemberton, Unite convenor of the 1,900 port workers on strike in Felixstowe.

Some bin workers have gone back to work after the bosses offered them special "overtime" pay.

"We only want decent pay so we can save up some money and better our lives," striker Harry Hall, a loader, told the *Militant* after the rally. "If we don't get it now, we'll have to go out again. I would like to convince the workmates that went back that we need to fight and stick together."

*— Catharina Tirsén*




UAW Region 4

**Members of United Auto Workers Local 180 on strike against Case New Holland in Sturtevant, Wisconsin. Over 1,000 workers have been on strike for five months there and in Iowa.**

# *Striking Ingredion bakery workers fight boss threats*

**BY EDWIN FRUIT**

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Twenty-five people, members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 100G, and strike supporters, walked the picket line in front of the Ingredion plant here Oct. 6.

The local's 200 members have been on strike since Aug. 1 after unanimously rejecting company demands to cut pay, decrease the number of vacation days, increase health care costs and outsource lab work. Workers are fighting to get rid of a divisive two-tier pay system.

Ray Taber, vice president of the local, reported to pickets that he and about 20 other strikers had just returned from Westchester, Illinois, where Ingredion's corporate headquarters is located.

"We had a spirited picket line there, which included unionists from the Chicago Federation of Labor," he said. Taber reported that there had been negotiations earlier in the week, where the company came in with a new proposal to eliminate the entire union maintenance department and contract out the work. "I thought negotiating was a give-and-take situation but this company only wants to take-and-take," he said.

The week before, strikers marched from the Ingredion plant to the Jean Oxley Linn County Public Service Center, asking officials to look into dangers with untrained replacement workers handling toxic chemicals in the plant.

"The five people who are qualified to unload those chemicals are standing out here in the street," Mike Moore, president of BCTGM Local 100G, told the press.

When union negotiators went to attend negotiations Sept. 20, company officials came in with half a dozen armed guards, said Moore. "We're here to negotiate in good faith and the company's bringing armed guards! It's intimidation and a lack of respect."

Iowa Federation of Labor President Charlie Wishman said in a recent email: "The intent was clear in the actions of the company. They were trying to terrorize or possibly even send a message they intend to harm people who are looking to discuss issues in their workplace and end a labor stoppage."

These workers deserve solidarity and financial support! Help get the word out about the strike. You can join the picket line, or drop off food and supplies at 1001 1st Street, SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Send a support letter to bctgm100gprez@gmail.com. Donate at Strike Fund/GoFundMe page.

# *25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO*

**October 27, 1997**

NEW YORK — "We are here and we are not leaving," chanted hundreds of people in Spanish, marching through Manhattan in defense of immigrant rights October 12. Among the marchers were workers and young people born in Mexico, Bangladesh, Poland, Haiti, Morocco, Korea, Puerto Rico, the United States, and many other countries.

"We are here demanding amnesty for Bangladeshi and all immigrants," said Mafizur Rahman, pointing to the contingent of some 150 Bangladeshis. Rahman is a part-time construction worker and cab driver in Queens. General amnesty for all immigrants was a central demand of the action.

New immigration laws that are about to go into effect will make gaining legal residence in the United States much harder. Up to 1.5 million people could be required to return to their homelands while awaiting residency papers.

**October 27, 1972**

More than 4,000 workers' homes were destroyed and 125 lives were lost in the flash flood at Buffalo Creek, W.Va., last February. But the death toll was not the only terrible result of that man-made raging torrent of mud, uprooted buildings, and water.

The Pittston Coal Corporation has refused to pay Buffalo Creek miners out of work by the flood, and is finagling to cheat the homeless victims out of their just reparations.

The Buffalo Creek Massacre Coalition (an arm of the Miners for Democracy) explains the effect of strip mining on the region's ecology.

It has a three-point program, including "full restitution to the survivors of the Buffalo Creek Massacre by the Pittston Company, not by the taxpayers," and "prosecution of the Pittston Company to the fullest extent of the law."

**October 27, 1947**

In the French elections Oct. 19, General [Charles] de Gaulle's newly-formed "Rally of the French People" received 39% of the votes. There was a coalescing of the forces of reaction. The uniting of these forces around a central figure is the most ominous development in European politics since the end of the war.

In 1945 the forces of French capitalism were demoralized, split into weak, warring factions. The masses surged leftward, seeking the road to socialism. But the cowardly leaders of the trade unions and the major political parties of the working class blocked this road. They took posts in the capitalist government and did their utmost to save the system that had plunged Europe into fascism and two world wars.

Only by militant action based on the program of socialism can the working class hope to defend itself against advancing reaction.

# South Africa port, rail workers strike for pay to match inflation

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

More than 30,000 striking port and rail workers shut down freight transportation across South Africa, demanding pay and benefit raises to keep up with inflating prices. Members of the United National Transport Union began their strike Oct. 6. They were joined Oct. 10 by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union.

The strike is against the government-owned seaport terminals and freight-rail company Transnet.

"The bosses are really arrogant," Satawu communications director Amanda Tshemese told the *Militant* by phone from Johannesburg Oct. 7. "Inflation is at 7.6% but they decided to insult us by offering a 1.5% increase." The unions are asking for a 12% to 13.5% increase. As the strike deadline approached, the company raised its offer to a mere 3%.

"They claim they don't have enough money to pay a bigger increase," Tshemese said. But South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* said the state-owned company reported a net profit of 5 billion rand ($275 million) last year.

"We are also demanding that the company agree to no retrenchments [layoffs] and that it increase the medical and housing allowance," United National Transport Union President Steven Leshabana said by phone.

Transnet took both unions to court claiming the strikes are illegal because they represent "essential" workers and charging the unions didn't follow proper procedures. Under South African labor law, unions have to maneuver through all kinds of red tape before a strike is considered "protected."

Company bosses have refused to agree to government-required picketing rules. "I think they are doing this to have a reason to say the strike is illegal," said Leshabana. So far the bosses' ploy has not worked. The Labour Court Oct. 10 dismissed Transnet's request to rule the strike illegal.


Rogan Ward
**Unionists at South Africa's state-owned logistics firm Transnet in Durban. National strike by 30,000 workers Oct. 6 shut ports, freight rail, for pay and benefit rises to match price hikes.**

"The workers on strike are among the lower-paid workers," Satawu Vice President Anele Kiet told the *Militant* Oct. 10. "They can't afford medical expenses. Most earn between 6,000 and 11,000 rand a month"

Despite the low wages, the Transnet workers don't quality for government housing assistance programs because they earn above the 3,500 rand per month threshold. Millions of people live in shacks made of corrugated iron in "informal" settlements and 33% of rural homes in South Africa don't have indoor plumbing.

The United National Transport Union is unique in South Africa in that it's the product of a fusion between all-white and all-black unions after the fall of apartheid. This "is one of our strengths," Leshabana said. About 80% of the country's population is comprised of black Africans and 8% white.

Satawu is part of the Cosatu union federation, which has historic ties to the ruling African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.

While the two unions compete to win members at Transnet, when it comes to negotiating and going on strike "we find common ground," Leshabana said.

Capitalist businesses that rely on rail and ports are in a panic over the effectiveness of the strike. Kumba Iron Ore, a subsidiary of Anglo American, said the strike would disrupt the shipment of up to 120,000 tons of iron ore exports a day.

# Democrats attack Supreme Court, constitutional freedoms

**Continued from front page**

U.S. Supreme Court, which they see as a further obstacle to imposing policies that they can't get passed in Congress.

More of them — backed by the editorial staffs of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* — are calling for term-limits for justices or for the court to be enlarged to more easily pack it with judges who think "correctly," that is, as they do. Others simply say the court should be gotten rid of altogether.

Their target, in fact, is the Constitution itself, which tasks the court with defending freedoms conquered by working people in revolutionary struggles alongside its role of protecting the prerogatives of the propertied rulers.

Freedom of speech, assembly and worship; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure; the right to a speedy trial of your peers; equal protection under the law; and other rights in the Constitution are crucial. Working people need them when we fight to organize and use our unions to counter employer assaults and in defense of our class interests.

In recent years the court has handed down a series of important constitutional rulings backing freedom of worship. These include overturning discriminatory restrictions imposed by state governments on religious services during the pandemic and defending the right of a high school football coach to kneel in prayer at the end of games.

In June the court ruled that the Environmental Protection Agency cannot unilaterally impose "climate change" policies that Democrats have failed to win a majority for in Congress.

These court decisions infuriated liberals and the middle-class left. They come on top of the Dobbs ruling this summer, in which the court overturned the unconstitutional 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, ordering decisions on abortion be returned to the people and their elected representatives. Dobbs opened the door to a necessary debate about why decriminalizing abortion is in the interests of all working people, as part of broader measures to defend women's rights and the working class.

Elena Kagan was one of three liberal Supreme Court justices outraged by recent court decisions, including the Dobbs ruling. She blames three other justices nominated by former President Donald Trump. "If new members of the court come in," Kagan says, "and all of a sudden very fundamental principles of law are being overthrown … people have a right to ask, 'What's going on there?'"

### Challenge to court's 'legitimacy'

Fellow liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayer echoed Kagan, saying Sept. 15, "There's going to be some question about the court's legitimacy." Kagan complains the Supreme Court is making rulings that reflect "one set of political views over another." Her problem is she wants to be able to impose *her* point of view. As far as she's concerned, the Constitution has nothing to do with it. Chief Justice John Roberts challenged Kagan's argument. "If the Court doesn't retain its legitimate function of interpreting the Constitution, I'm not sure who would take up that mantle," he said.

Democratic President Joseph Biden weighed in, Oct. 11, portraying the Supreme Court as "more of an advocacy group these days than it is … evenhanded."

Biden previously said the Dobbs ruling was "the first in our entire history that didn't just fail to preserve a constitutional freedom, but actually took away a fundamental right."

Liberal commentators pretend the Dobbs ruling ended legal access to abortion. But abortion remains legal in more than 20 states.

As the Dobbs decision correctly says, the 1973 Roe ruling *was* unconstitutional. Liberal justices who then held the majority on the court simply made up a schema with no legal precedent to rule on a hotly disputed question in line with their politics. It cut off debate just beginning across the country before a decisive majority had been won.

Overturning Roe, the Dobbs ruling placed decisions on abortion back in the hands of the people and their elected representatives, where it can be debated and fought out alongside other questions that are crucial for advancing the working class. This is to our advantage.

In the wake of the Dobbs ruling, more liberals are openly bemoaning the court's very existence. The *New York Times* editors say the court has "been transformed into the judicial arm of the Republican Party." Only the election of a Congress that is willing "to discipline the court" and "relegate it to a less central place in our constitutional order" can prevent further "abuse" of power, writes *Times* columnist Jamelle Bouie.

He says the biggest threat isn't former President Donald Trump, as horrible as he thinks Trump is, but "in fact, the Constitution" itself. Under the Constitution, he says, Trump came within "a few tens of thousands of additional votes in a few states" to winning the 2020 election. In addition to attacking the Constitution and the court, Bouie advocates getting rid of the Senate and the Electoral College, in hopes of assuring Democrats' domination of government for decades to come.

Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez urges Congress to sharply limit the high court's reach, barring it from ruling on the constitutionality of laws relating to "abortion, marriage equality … and intimacy."

Bouie, like other liberal commentators, heaps praise on Biden's Sept. 1 Philadelphia speech — held, ironically, in the very hall where the Constitution was written — in which the president targeted "MAGA Republicans" as "a clear and present danger." This is why the Democrats have been working overtime to refurbish the FBI and use it to go after Trump and his supporters. This is the capitalist rulers' main political police outfit whose task is to go after workers, our unions, fighters for Black rights, opponents of Washington's wars, and groups like the Socialist Workers Party.

The Democrats' war against constitutional freedoms is the central question in U.S. politics today, a deadly threat to the working class. Defending and extending these protections is central to building unions and advancing struggles of workers and farmers.



# Demand Washington end its economic war against Cuba! Now!

**Continued from front page**

in recent weeks by the effects of Hurricane Ian, which damaged or demolished tens of thousands of homes and farms in western Pinar del Río and Artemisa provinces, contaminated water supplies, and plunged most of the country into darkness for more than a day.

This made-in-Washington social disaster comes on top of the raging petroleum fire Aug. 5 in Matanzas, which destroyed half the storage capacity at Cuba's largest oil distribution facility. Due to longstanding trade bans and suffocating international banking sanctions, Cubans continue to face severe shortages of medicine and medical supplies, fuel and other vital necessities. The impact of these imperialist measures is multiplied by exploding prices, rising interest rates, and stagflation due to world capitalism's production and trade crisis, as well as by the consequences of the COVID pandemic and Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

## *Socialist Workers Party National Committee statement*

For working people and our allies in the United States — the imperialist powerhouse of this unrelenting assault — there could be no more urgent time for every opponent of Washington's embargo to demand of the Biden White House and Congress: End the economic war against Cuba NOW! Every aspect of it. And forswear its reimposition!

There could be no better moment to explain the facts and win growing numbers of working people and youth to this decisive political battle.

Instead, the New York-based People's Forum placed a full-page "Urgent Appeal to President Biden" in the Oct. 2 Sunday edition of the *New York Times* begging the Biden administration to *suspend* the embargo, "*even if just for the next six months*, to purchase the necessary construction materials to REBUILD" [italics added].

What a betrayal of the elementary obligation of those of us here in the United States who oppose Washington's assault on Cuban sovereignty. What a betrayal of the interests of working people on both sides of the Florida Straits.



Militant/Sara Lobman
**March by New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí coalition in New York's Harlem neighborhood Aug. 28, demands complete end to U.S. rulers' economic, financial and trade embargo against Cuba.**

Whatever our views on other issues, now is the time to come together in calling on Washington to immediately and unconditionally *end* the embargo. Not lift it for a few months. Not make it a bit more bearable, before the U.S. rulers again inflict it. *End it!*

For those living in the U.S. to demand anything short of that lends political legitimacy to Washington's decadeslong economic war against the Cuban Revolution. We demand that the U.S. government halt every diplomatic and political manifestation of that hostile course as well.



**Opponents of Washington's economic war on Cuba here in the U.S., unlike *New York Times* ad above, must not give even a tip of their finger to any infringement of Cuba's sovereignty.**

The U.S. imperialist rulers and their two political parties don't need advice on *how* to do so. They don't need lessons on the deaths and destruction caused by the embargo — *that's the rulers' aim,* and has been for more than six decades. As the State Department's infamous "Mallory memorandum" put it in April 1960: "The majority of Cubans support" the revolution. For the U.S. government, therefore, the necessary state policy must be one that "makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of [the] government."

Cuban workers and farmers in arms rapidly put to rest Washington's goal of instigating the "overthrow of the government." Those efforts by the U.S. rulers were dealt lasting political and military blows in April 1961 by the defeat of U.S.-organized mercenaries during the Bay of Pigs invasion at the hands of Cuba's revolutionary militias, armed forces and police. At a mobilization of hundreds of thousands in Havana to prepare to crush that aggression, Fidel Castro confirmed what Cuban toilers' own class-struggle experience had already taught them. "This is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people," Fidel said. "And for this revolution, we are prepared to give our lives."

Addressing President Biden, the People's Forum pleads: "The people of Cuba are part of our family — the human family. Don't let outdated Cold War politics prevent peace-loving people from helping the Cubans to rebuild. … The United States loses nothing by being a good neighbor and allowing Cuba to recover fully from this tragic moment."

But there's no such thing as a politically homogeneous "United States"; it's class divided. Unlike working people in this country, the propertied ruling families represented by the imperialist Democratic and Republican parties *have a great deal to lose* by "allowing Cuba to recover." That's why the Biden White House has doubled down on the most punishing package of sanctions yet imposed on Cuba. The capitalists hope their decadeslong inhumane policy is working.

Their actions — ever since the subjugation of Cuba during the Spanish-American War — prove they don't care about "the human family." They care about raising profit rates and intensifying the exploitation of working people, whatever the consequences for *our* families. And Washington's course has nothing to do with "outdated Cold War politics." It has to do with Cuba's socialist revolution: with the example set by the workers and farmers who made that revolution and defend it to this day.

The U.S. rulers are determined to bury that revolution in a mountain of lies and smother any political interest among workers and farmers in emulating what our brothers and sisters in Cuba have achieved. It's what the bosses try to do to every strike and struggle by working people in the U.S.

Their hatred — and fear — of the working people of Cuba is in fact an extension of their contempt for workers here fighting to defend our constitutional freedoms against assaults by the White House, the FBI, and other institutions of repression of the capitalist state. Their fear of rail workers, coal miners, bakery workers, and other working people organizing to strengthen our trade unions as we fight for safe job conditions, for wages that grow faster than inflation, and for shorter hours that enable us to share in the lives of our families and take part in union and political activity. Their contempt for tens of millions fighting exploitation, the oppression of African Americans and women, and the wars produced by capitalism's dog-eat-dog social relations.

When Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez was in New York this fall to address the United Nations General Assembly, he was asked whether the Cuban government, in face of the imposition of hundreds of new U.S. sanctions in recent years, would "negotiate anything with America ever again."

"We will have to," the foreign minister pointed out, as the Cuban government has always done when there's an opening "to reestablish dialogue" on the basis of mutual sovereignty and respect. Cuban diplomatic personnel press for every advance in this direction they can wrench through talks with Washington and other governments regarding the brutal embargo, Cuba's removal from the contemptible "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list, the status of occupied Cuban territory at Guantánamo, migratory issues, drug trafficking and environmental disasters. That's the obligation of the Cuban government to the Cuban people, an obligation they've met with dignity and honor since the first days of the revolution.

The responsibility of the working-class movement and others in this country who defend Cuba's national sovereignty and independence, however, is not the same. It is Washington, which falsely claims to speak in the name of the people of the United States, that has waged a nonstop assault on the Cuban Revolution since 1959. The job of opponents of that reactionary course here in the U.S., unlike the proposals in the *New York Times* ad, must not give an inch, even the tip of a finger, to any encroachment on Cuba's sovereignty.

The revolutionary program, confidence, proletarian conduct, and activity of the Socialist Workers Party have been renewed and strengthened over decades by the steadfastness of Cuban working people and the Cuban government in defending what they've conquered. Both in word and above all in deeds, we will continue getting out the truth about their socialist revolution to working people in the U.S. and wherever else we can reach.

End Washington's economic, trade, financial and diplomatic war against the people of Cuba! Now!

# Consolidation of forces will boost Communist League in the Pacific

**BY PATRICK BROWN AND MIKE TUCKER**

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — "The regroupment of our forces in Sydney qualitatively changes the prospects for the Communist League to go forward in the Pacific region," said Mike Tucker, a longtime leader and organizer of the Communist League in New Zealand, speaking here Sept. 24.

"Consolidating in one CL will enable us to better respond to the growing resistance to capitalism's worldwide crisis, participate more effectively in the class struggle and recruit."

Tucker was addressing a public meeting to explain and celebrate the decision of the Communist Leagues in Australia and New Zealand to consolidate and build a stronger, combined CL in Sydney, Australia. A similar meeting was held in Australia in July.

Thirty-five people — members, supporters and others from Australia and New Zealand — attended the meeting and send-off for comrades in New Zealand on their way to join with the CL in Australia. The panel of speakers included leaders of the CL in the Pacific, as well as representatives from the leaderships of the Communist Leagues in Canada and the United Kingdom, and the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.

A collection at the meeting registered the enthusiastic response of participants, raising over NZ$6,000 (US$3,360). A lively social and dinner followed.

The meeting was co-chaired by Communist League members Janet Roth and Baskaran Appu. Roth read a number of messages wishing the strengthened League well and reported on the well-received donations of books from the League's book center to prison and other libraries.

Tucker told the audience that he had been one of those, predominantly teenagers, who at the end of the 1960s formed a party that became the Communist League in New Zealand. "We were inspired by the example of Cuba's workers and farmers and the socialist revolution they were carrying out."

"As we acted to build and lead a mass movement against the imperialist military invasion of Vietnam," Tucker said, "we had to take on a reformist Labour Party in Parliament, and long-time reactionary Stalinist parties aligned to Beijing and Moscow, and their class-collaborationist politics."

"We met the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., and other communists from around the world. Through collaboration with them we began to draw on revolutionary working-class continuity, from Cuba's socialist revolution, led by Fidel Castro, and reaching back to Lenin, Trotsky, the Bolsheviks and to Marx and Engels.

"At the end of the 1970s, we joined with our world movement to organize our party's members, and leaders, into industrial jobs and the unions. In New Zealand this included the powerful meat workers' unions." We built a proletarian party, multinational and internationalist, he said.

"This turn coincided with the revolution in Iran, which overthrew the shah in 1979, and the coming to power of workers and farmers governments in Grenada and Nicaragua. We reached out to these revolutions and also to struggles across the Pacific in Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, the Philippines and elsewhere.

"Through these and many other experiences, the leagues in Australia and New Zealand acted shoulder to shoulder to mutually strengthen their work."

It is this internationalist perspective and continuity, which shaped our cadres and parties from the start, that we are building on today, he said.

### The class struggle in Australia

Linda Harris, organizer of the Communist League in Australia, said, "As inflation grinds down on working people, we see a growing number of workers starting to fight for wage increases, shorter hours and to resist assaults on safety conditions. The low point of labor resistance we have lived through is behind us.

"Our party is part of these struggles, fighting for a course to use union power, to develop a class-struggle leadership, and to build a labor party based on the trade unions.

"This is the perspective we will put forward as we campaign in the New South Wales state elections next year," she added, "including trips out to workers and farmers in the countryside." Harris announced that she and Robert Aiken are standing as the Communist League candidates.

"In Sydney, just in the last few weeks, we've been able to get to union rallies organized by nurses and midwives and child care workers fighting for wages that keep up with inflation and for better staffing ratios," she said. "And there are many fights that we haven't been able to get to."

"A stronger CL in Sydney opens up the possibilities of responding to developments in our class like these, and to respond to politics not only in Australia but in the broader region, from Sri Lanka, to Indonesia to the Philippines. We have been too stretched to do so."

### International greetings

Harris read from a message to the meeting from Ron Poulsen, a founding leader of the Communist League in Australia:

"I wanted to add my voice from afar to your discussion and celebration of the momentous decision by comrades in the Communist Leagues to strengthen our forces in the Pacific by regrouping in Sydney, adding powerfully to the Communist League there, and to our international movement's work in the region."




Militant/Baskaran Appu

**Communist League cadres in the Pacific region have moved to consolidate forces in Australia to strengthen and expand the reach of the communist movement throughout the region. Plans were celebrated at July 23 Sydney meeting, above, and at Sept. 24 meeting in Auckland.**

Since World War II, "Canberra, the dominant imperialist power in the southwest Pacific, has been Washington's main regional ally.

"This is the weighty objective reason, along with the size of the working class there, for consolidating in Australia," Poulsen wrote. "Based in Sydney, a combined Communist League is stronger and better positioned to reach out to working-class struggles across the continent and to the huge part of humanity to the north, west and east, including in New Zealand."

The war in Ukraine, the first land war between major capitalist powers in Europe in 75 years, is a brutal manifestation of big changes and alignments in the post-WWII world order put together by U.S. imperialism, Steve Penner, organizer of the Communist League in Canada, told the meeting.

"Putin's invading forces are breaking their teeth on the courageous resistance of Ukraine's working people and armed forces," he said. "Since the invasion began seven months ago our world movement has campaigned far and wide to defend Ukraine's independence and for Russian troops out of Ukraine.

"The Communist League in Canada salutes your decision. It's an important and necessary step in building the kind of proletarian party in the Pacific region that is rooted in the continuity of the international communist movement. A party with the goal of taking political power out of the hands of the capitalist warmakers and putting it in the hands of working people."

Jonathan Silberman, a long-time leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom, recalled how a number of party leaders in Sweden in 2011 and Iceland in 2007 moved to London to help build the League there.

The strengthened party has been able to boost its work across the U.K. and Ireland, as well as in Europe, the Middle East and further afield, he said.

It has recruited new cadre and begun to "take advantage of renewed openings to be part of trade union struggles against the working conditions and wages imposed by the bosses."

Dave Prince, speaking for the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., told the gathering, "This decision by the comrades in the Pacific is a bold step."

He stressed that working people in the U.S. and other imperialist countries face an offensive — often spearheaded by the "left" — against constitutional rights of assembly, free speech and more. "Opposing this assault is at the center of the class struggle in the U.S. today," he said.

"Cuba's socialist revolution and communist continuity are a powerful example for working people today," Prince

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# As Putin bombs Ukraine civilians: Defend Ukraine sovereignty!

**Continued from front page**

and fuel to Moscow's forces that occupy parts of southern Ukraine. It was disabled but has since been partially reopened.

Ukrainian forces have retaken territory in each of the four regions Putin claimed to have annexed Sept. 21.

Despite vastly more soldiers and weapons, Putin's regime finds its military being outfought. Deeply held aspirations to defend their country's independence give Ukrainian forces something worth fighting for, in sharp contrast to the Russian soldiers Putin has dragooned to be used as cannon fodder in his drive to reestablish the czarist prison house of nations.

Ukraine's counteroffensive in the south is going more slowly than in the northeast, where many Russian soldiers fled. But its forces are steadily making their way closer to the southern port of Kherson, the only city under Moscow's control on the western bank of the Dnipro River.

In Donetsk, fierce fighting continued around the city of Bakhmut. Ukrainian forces advanced beyond Lyman, retaking the village of Torske. "When [the Russian soldiers] left, they were running and panicking on the street," Antonina, a pensioner there, told Al Jazeera.

### Class struggle in Russia

The war has intensified class inequalities across Russia and has also shone a spotlight on unresolved national questions.

Hundreds of Russian soldiers in Belgorod, outraged at the inhumane conditions they face, protested in an online video. Hastily mobilized near the Ukraine border, they explain that they



**Explosion damaged bridge over Kerch Strait in Black Sea Oct. 8, disrupting supply lines between Russia and the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine seized by Moscow in 2014.**

are forced to sleep on the floor, pay for their own food and equipment and face mistreatment from officers.

Their protest came after demonstrations across the country against Putin's troop mobilization. Underlying this resistance is widespread opposition among working people to the regime and its war, especially in the most impoverished areas where non-ethnic Russians have long been denied national rights, like in Dagestan and Buryatia. A disproportionate number of the deaths of Russian soldiers are from these oppressed nationalities.

Across Russia more working people are looking for ways to use their power to resist the devastation Putin imposes. The war is stirring working-class struggle that will accelerate as the invasion drags on and the body count rises. It is also spurring efforts by Central Asian countries to get out from under Moscow's domination.

A Ukrainian battalion commander told the *New York Times* that some Russian soldiers are demoralized, hungry and scared, and ready to give themselves up. But others fought well, he said, and the war is far from over. His battalion has captured 23 Russian soldiers in the course of Kyiv's counteroffensive, providing them with food, water and warm clothes, before turning them over to authorities.

A Ukrainian hotline has received some 2,000 calls about how to surrender from Russian soldiers mobilized for the front or even by their wives, according to Ukraine's Ministry of Defense.

The Kremlin staged sham referendums in occupied territories late last month, declaring these areas part of Russia. Since then, its forces have stepped up the deportation of Ukrainian children and families, targeting people who wear a T-shirt with a Ukrainian flag or those saying they opposed the referendum. Ivan Fedorov, Ukrainian mayor of now Russian-occupied Melitopol, told the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group that a woman was deported from the city for not knowing the Russian language.

Cracks are showing within the Kremlin's top echelons alarmed by the disastrous course of the war. Pro-war military and civilian commentators now mention Putin among those they blame for recent setbacks. He has responded by replacing some of his top commanders.

The roots of Putin's regime go back to the Stalinist police-state apparatus and murder machine that dominated the former Soviet Union and crushed all opposition. Today it tries to advance the interests of the country's capitalists. But they've seen their prospects for investment, trade and profit shrink as a consequence of the war, along with Moscow's growing isolation and the impact of the worldwide capitalist economic slowdown.

As many as 700,000 Russians have left the country, heading to Central Asia or Europe since Putin's troop mobilization went into effect Sept. 21. Those fleeing are largely from the middle class and some better-off workers with the resources to pull up stakes and pay the cost of the trip. They leave behind millions of workers who share their hatred toward Putin's regime.



# *Mariupol defenders: Help fight to free POWs held in Russia*

**BY LAURA GARZA**

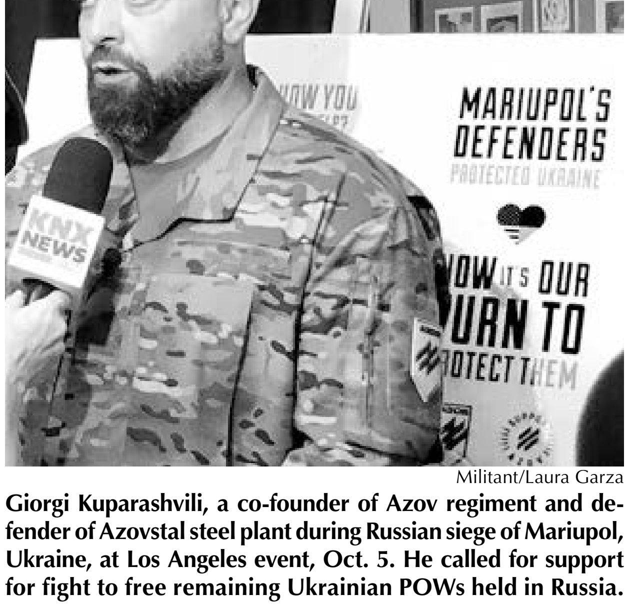
LOS ANGELES — Over 200 people filled the Ukrainian Culture Center here Oct. 5 to hear appeals for help for Ukrainian prisoners of war held by Moscow. Speaking were several members of the Ukrainian armed forces who had been part of the defense during the murderous siege at the Azovstal Steel plant in Mariupol.

Appearing in his military uniform was Lt. Col. Giorgi Kuparashvili, 44, an officer in the Azov regiment, who was evacuated by helicopter after being wounded there. He was joined by two soldiers, also in uniform, who had been held prisoner by the Russian government — Pvt. Artur Lypka, 22, and Pvt. Vladyslav Zhaivoronok, 29, who lost his left leg in the fighting. They were only released recently in a prisoner exchange.

The Ukrainian fighters in Azovstal were the last combatants fighting in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty in Mariupol, as the city was largely destroyed by Moscow's relentless bombardment. "The Russians attacked from the north, from the west and from the sea," said Kuparashvili. "We held off 20,000 Russians and gave time for our forces to regroup around Kyiv." Faced with a situation of no food, no medicine and no way to defend themselves further, the Ukrainian high command ordered them to surrender. "Our main goal now is to get our brothers out," he said, referring to those still in captivity.

"When we were held prisoner we wondered how the Russian prisoners were being treated in Ukraine," said Zhaivoronok. "We were treated very poorly, medical aid was insufficient, food was insufficient. When we were released, I saw the breakfast the Russian prisoners were receiving, and it was more food than we got all day."

"Ukraine is a civilized country," he said. "We adhere to international conventions on treatment of prisoners. Russia signs treaties but doesn't stick to them."




Militant/Laura Garza

**Giorgi Kuparashvili, a co-founder of Azov regiment and defender of Azovstal steel plant during Russian siege of Mariupol, Ukraine, at Los Angeles event, Oct. 5. He called for support for fight to free remaining Ukrainian POWs held in Russia.**

Yuliia Fedosiuk, wife of Arseniy Fedosiuk, an Azov regiment officer who is still being held prisoner by the Russians, also spoke. "I don't know his location, I don't know his condition," she said, appealing for audience members to call representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the U.S. government to insist that the Red Cross finds a way to check on the conditions of the remaining prisoners.

The four speakers have been on tour to several cities, including San Francisco, San Diego and Washington, D.C.

# Communist League

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noted. Revolutionaries, he added, should not ask, "How is Cuba doing?" a question sometimes raised by Cuba's friends who have gone wobbly. Instead, we ask and answer, "How are *we* doing? How are we doing in building a proletarian party that can emulate the course carried out by Cuba's workers and farmers under Fidel's leadership?

"Engaging the big political questions, making the decisions that enable us to do that, as the comrades are doing here, as we are doing in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. is decisive," he said. "We welcome this occasion to celebrate these steps together."

## — *LETTER* —

### Berni Kuhn

Berni Kuhn, a long-time supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died here Sept. 19.

She had been a member in the Minneapolis and Albuquerque branches. Berni was a reader and kept informed on politics. Despite long-term health problems, she regularly attended Militant Labor Forums and looked forward to the political discussions there.

*Edwin Fruit*
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*